



GEORGE W. BUSH
PRESIDENTIAL CENTER
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REMARKS BY PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

**George W. Bush Institute's Immigration and Economic Growth Conference:
How Immigrants Grow the U.S. Economy
*Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas***

Thank you all very much for the warm welcome. I, too, would like to thank the Dallas Federal Reserve for hosting this. Harvey [Holcomb], thank you very much. Please thank your staff for accommodating us and thank you for – we beg your forgiveness for the inconveniences. I'm sorry Richard [Fisher] is not here. He's a dear friend and he's doing a fine job as President and CEO of the Fed.

I would like to thank our panelists. I just spent a productive hour visiting with them. It's a diverse group of people who are smart, capable and they have a lot of knowledge about the important issue of immigration.

I want to thank Mark Langdale, who is the President of the George W. Bush Foundation, as well as Jim Glassman and Amity. One of the abilities of the Bush Center is to attract bright minds. There's no brighter mind than Amity Shlaes. Plus, she's an energizer bunny. (Laughter.)

I want to thank you all for coming. In particular I want to thank the people who have supported our Institute and have faith in our ability to build a lasting place of action. The Bush Center is housed at SMU and our building will be opening next April. I can't wait for you to see it. It's a spectacular piece of architecture and a wonderful landscape, and we're thankful to SMU for its gracious hospitality. The Institute – even though the building is not open – the Institute is up and running. We are a nonpartisan, action-oriented Institute that focuses on human freedom.

For example, we are working to free people from ignorance. We are staunch defenders of accountability in the public schools to make sure every child can read, write, add and subtract. As well, we are leading a reform movement on how best to recruit and train school principals.

We are working to free people from disease. So we are leading a significant effort to save women from dying from cervical cancer on the continent of Africa. Thanks to the generosity of our country, many women receive anti-retroviral drugs, and therefore are living. As it turns out, the HIV virus increases the incidence of cervical cancer. We're doing something about it at the Bush Center. All human life is precious. And we're acting upon that moral truth.

We're promoting free societies. We believe that the freedom movements taking place, for example in the Middle East, will ultimately lead to peace. We also believe that women will lead the freedom movement in the Middle East. And to this end, we've started an initiative to help Egyptian women find their rightful place in a new Egypt.

We are helping the defenders of freedom – that is, we’re helping our vets.

And finally, as Amity mentioned, we are fostering human freedom by defending free enterprise and free markets

The 4% Solution is a product, in other words, we don’t just sit around and think. We actually produce results. And here is one of the results: it’s a book written by renowned economists, including Nobel Prize winners. I wrote the introduction – I am not a renowned economist or a Nobel Prize winner. (Laughter.) We believe that our economy can grow at four percent a year with the right tax, energy, trade and regulatory policy. The book includes chapters on the importance of immigrants to economic growth. And that’s what will be discussed today.

Immigrants come with new skills and new ideas. They fill a critical gap in our labor market. They work hard for a chance for a better life. Today our panelists will discuss those contributions in a sober and enlightening way.

America is a nation of immigrants. Immigrants have helped build the country that we have become, and immigrants can help build a dynamic tomorrow.

Not only do immigrants help build our economy, they invigorate our soul. Growing up here in Texas, like many in this room, we’ve had the honor and privilege of meeting newly-arrived. Those whom I’ve met love their families. They see education as a bright future for their children. Some willingly defend the flag.

I don’t know if you’ve ever been to a naturalization ceremony, but it’s an awesome thing. I had the privilege of doing some when I was President. I’ll never forget the proud looks on those whose hands were raised to swear allegiance to our nation.

America can be a lawful society and a welcoming society at the same time. As our nation debates the proper course of action relating to immigration, I hope we do so with a benevolent spirit and keep in mind the contribution of immigrants.

Thank you for having me. (Applause.)

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